

# BNA Members Meeting Minutes

## 01. Congregational Singing

## 02. Devotion (Jacques Louw)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 42 (“How to deal with Discouragement: The Honest seeking of a discouraged saint for the Presence of God”).

With the fear of abandonment being a reality, the Christian has great assurance that we are not abandoned by Christ (cf. Jn 14). Nevertheless, we can still at times feel abandoned and become discouraged. It is this discouragement that the Psalmist deals with. Six dimensions of a discouraged saint that is seeking after God

1. The desperate cry of a discouraged heart. In times of discouragement we must seek God, not just a change in circumstance.
2. The unwise dwelling on the past brings further despair. Don't dwell on the past, but thank God for the present.
3. The discipline of declaring the truth to your soul. Do not listen to your feeling, instead preach to your feelings.
4. A step in the right direction: drawing near to God. Don't run away in times of discouragement, but run to God. Don't doubt his love, but remind yourself of His goodness.
5. Dealing honestly with God regarding your deepest doubts and dreads. When feeling abandoned, remember that Jesus was abandoned at the Cross, so that we would never truly be abandoned.
6. A determined disposition to keep on focusing on God. In discouragement keep on hoping. Read from Romans 8:18 and 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. Encouraged by the fact that God is still God in times of discouragement.

## 03. Welcome (Lance Laughton - LL)

## 04. Moment of Silence and prayer (LL)

## 05. Constituting Meeting (Shayne de Lange - SDL)

31 member churches were in attendance, therefore meeting was duly constituted.

## 06. Approval of Previous Minutes (SDL)

Minutes from the last Members Meeting held on the 16th of November at

Eastside Community Church were accepted.

## **07. Co-ordinator Feedback (LL)**

### **7.1. Co-ordinator Report.**

Lance gave a breakdown of how he spends his time as the BNA co-ordinator. Various issues facing the church were highlighted (e.g. technology, evangelism, pastoral sin, pastoral fatigue, relational fallouts, financial constraints, changing laws, shifts in historic partnerships), with varying responses that would be needed (e.g. sharing resources, media focused evangelism, plurality of elders and congregational appreciation, up skill on reconciliation, encourage giving, understanding laws, pursuing viable partnerships).

### **7.2. BU Feedback**

Lance gave feedback regarding the relationship between BU and the BNA, providing an overview of how the relationship has progressed from the 2019 BNA AGM to present. As it stands, the 2018 BU constitution is operational, and therefore, due to the stipulations of that constitution, the BNA by voting against becoming a network will have no legal standing or recognition within the BU come October 2021. Out of a concern for the well-being of our pastors and churches, and not desiring to be independent, Lance shared that the BNA executive have investigated the possibility of partnering with other associations, like the ABK and FIEC in the UK. Lance clarified that the BNA executive will not make any decisions regarding new partnership, but that their findings will be presented to the member churches for discussion and voting.

**Question:** Bruce Button: If BNA has voted for option 3 (to stay as an association), and if option 3 has a time frame that ends October 2021, then, barring changes in the BU, does it not mean option 2 (to separate from the BU), is forced upon the BNA? **Answer.** Lance: Yes. Follow up question: Have the BU started setting up an alternative network within the BNA region? **Answer.** Lance: The BU will be constitutionally obligated to set up an alternative network.

Colin Diesel, representing the BU, was given opportunity to respond. Colin noted that the new structure was voted in at 2018 Assembly and therefore is standing and would require all associations to reapply to the BU. Regarding the 2017 statement of faith, Colin shared that the BU executive will table the 2017 statement as an acceptable statement at the next Assembly. The sticking point however is wanting the 2017 statement instead of 1924 statement. Nevertheless, Colin mentioned that NLC plan to seek a way forward for the sake of unity. Regarding the new structure, although the structure is a financial burden at the moment, Colin noted that it is a good structure and a few key positions can be filled to get the ball rolling. It was shared that the BU are in the process of searching for a National Ministry Leader and National Ministry Administrator. Colin gave feedback regarding some of the challenges facing the BU and appealed to member churches to be patient with the BU in this transition period.

**Question.** Paul Witter (Waterkloof BC): How many associations have transitioned into a network? **Answer.** Colin; None, but some have started the process.

**Question.** Isaac Pinto (Central BC): Has the Assembly not voted for the need of a new statement? **Answer.** Colin: No, the 2017 Assembly voted for an updated statement.

George Ngamlama, representing the BU, was given opportunity to speak. Made a plea to the BNA to not leave the BU to form partnerships with other associations.

**Question.** Peter Sammons (Germiston BC): For a point of clarity, would not the BNA need to reapply as a network and not as an association? **Answer.** Colin: Yes. Mention was made that there are many unseen issues that need to be dealt with.

**Question.** Clinton Stone (Honeyridge BC): Will a proposal be made at the next Assembly to extend the October 2021 deadline so as to not force option 2 upon the BNA? **Answer.** Colin: Churches need to make proposals to the Assembly, NLC cannot work by itself.

**Question.** Mark Odendaal (Eastside CC): Is it true that the BNA does not have representation at the BU NLC? **Answer.** Lance: Yes, he is not willing, due to a matter of conscience, to stand as the BNA representative on the NLC.

**Question.** Lukie Dercksen (Rietvlei BC): What will the implications be for the BNA becoming a network. **Answer.** Lance. The loss of the BNA's identity, namely its statement of faith, its constitution, and its right to make its own decision. Colin disagreed, noting that decision making remain at the Assembly level. Colin, agreed though that the BNA will need to change significantly.

**Question.** Mark Odendaal (Eastside CC): As the BNA co-ordinator, does Lance have the right to refuse to stand on the BU's NLC? **Answer.** Lance: BNA executive voted on a representative to the BU, but no full-time representative has been elected. Position has been offered to the member churches, yet no one has come forward.

**Question.** Riaan Niemand (Eastside CC): How can reconciliation be sought if the BNA co-ordinator refuses to engage with the BU? **Answer.** Shayne: According to the BNA By-Laws (18.2), there are no stipulations that require Lance to be on the NLC.

**Question.** Clinton Stone (Honeyridge BC): Surely there should still be BNA representation on the NLC, even if it isn't a requirement for Lance? **Answer.** Shayne: The BNA have not disengaged with the BU, it was decided by the executive that when an invitation is extended from the BU, one BNA executive member will be tasked to attend the NLC.

### **7.3. Co-ordinator Reappointment (SDL)**

It was shared that, according to the By-Laws (17.3.1), Lance could be reappointed

after his 3 year term has come to an end. BNA executive therefore, as per its constitutional rights (By-Law 17.3.3), voted to reappoint Lance as BNA co-ordinator at the January BNA executive meeting.

A discussion ensued regarding Lance's relationship with the BU and the BNA executive's responsibility to engage with the NLC. The opinion prevailed that it should be the co-ordinators responsibility to represent the BNA on the NLC.

**Proposal** by Parmesh Venkatasami (Wychwood BC) that the BNA's executive decision to reappoint Lance be postponed until the BNA AGM, with the hopes of seeking reconciliation between Lance and the BU NLC. Also, it was agreed that Colin will look into and address Lance's resignation letter from the BU NLC. Proposal seconded by Rudi Botha (Open BC). Proposal carried with one abstention.

#### **7.4. BU Assembly (Riaan Niemand)**

Feedback given regarding plans for the BU Assembly. To be held 3-6 October 2021 at Eastside. Mention made of having pre-assembly webinar to discuss different perspectives in the BU. Assembly theme to be "Rebuild" with various speakers addressing different topics with the purpose of building into the lives of pastors.

#### **08. Finance Report (Brian Viljoen)**

Brian gave feedback on finance report. Brian notified that he will not be standing for re election as the BNA treasurer after his current term. Report accepted.

#### **09. Area Representatives**

Due to time restraints and due to no pressing issues, it was agreed to not proceed with area representative reports.

#### **10. Constitutional and By-Law Changes (SDL)**

Notice was given, as per Constitutional requirements (15.1), to make alterations to the BNA Constitution and By-Laws at the 2021 BNA AGM.

- Proposed wording for 10.3 of Constitution; "Each member of the EXECUTIVE shall affirm the Declaration of Principle, namely the Statement of Faith and the Statement of Baptist Principles."
- Proposed wording for 5.8 of Constitution; "to disseminate The Statement of Faith and the Baptist Principles whilst advocating religious liberty for all."
- Proposed change to 10.5 of Constitution, from 75% to 66% Quorum for Executive meetings.
- Proposed change to 11.1 of By-Laws, from 50% to 66% Quorum for Executive meetings.

#### **11. Matters Arising (LL)**

Marianna Soal (Rosettenville BC), on behalf of the BWD and BMD, invited member

churches to join in a Zoom prayer meeting on a Saturday afternoon in the month of July. More details to follow.

**12. Closed in Prayer (LL)**